



INDIANA PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS COUNCIL

302 W. Washington Street, Room E-205

Indianapolis, IN 46204-2767

www.in.gov/ipac

Phone: (317) 232-1836

Fax: (317) 233-3599

Ripley County Prosecutor Testifies to Federal Commission

(INDIANAPOLIS – April 15, 2020) – Ripley County Prosecutor Ric Hertel testified virtually on April 14 to a Department of Justice Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice on the issues prosecutors around Indiana and the nation are seeing on domestic violence and sexual assault crimes. Hertel provided the commission with 10 recommendations he had on how to more successfully prosecute those kinds of crimes and took questions from the commission members as well.

An elected prosecutor of a mostly rural county since 1999, Hertel told the commission that he has a small staff and personally handles multiple jury trials each year, including domestic violence and sexual assault cases.

“An important thing to understand is these kinds of cases differ widely from other criminal cases that we see,” Hertel told the commission. “With domestic violence cases, prosecutors have to deal with an increase in witness intimidation, dynamics of power and control, or feelings of love and loyalty toward the perpetrator in these cases that just don’t exist in other types of crimes. With sexual assault crimes, we’re dealing with alcohol and drugs being used as weapons instead of guns and knives. That’s a whole different dynamic and needs its own skill set and training.”

Most of Hertel’s recommendations focused on additional training for prosecutors and law enforcement officers on how to respond to domestic violence situations, how to gather evidence more effectively, how to successfully pursue a case to secure a conviction and how to more effectively collect data to understand why these kinds of intimate cases are under reported and under charged nationwide. Hertel also advocated for more Federal guidelines and funding for prosecutors that would be specifically focused on sexual assault and domestic cases.

Learn more about the Commission and what it is hoping to accomplish by clicking the link below.

<https://www.justice.gov/ag/presidential-commission-law-enforcement-and-administration-justice>